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# The Library Assistant

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF  
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION.

VOL. XI.

EDITED BY HARRY G. SURETIES, F.L.A.

No. 1.

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# The Library Assistant :

*The Official Journal of the Library Assistants' Association.*

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No. 192.

JANUARY, 1914.

Published Monthly.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The next meeting of the Association will be held on **Wednesday, 7th January**, at the **Fulham Central Public Library**, 598, Fulham Road, S.W. There will be an opportunity for inspecting the Library from 7.30 p.m., and the following proceedings will commence at 8 p.m., with **WALTER S. C. RAE**, Chief Librarian, presiding:—

The L.A.A. Easter School in Holland: preamble, illustrated with lantern slides, by **W. C. BÉRICK SAYERS**.

A paper entitled "The Dutch Public Library" will be read by **H. A. SHARP**, winner of the MacAlister Prize for the best practical essay on the work of the Easter School.

The Holland Album, containing contributions from those attending the School, will be on view.

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## SOUTH COAST BRANCH.

The next meeting will be held on **Friday, 16th January**, at the Central Public Library, Eastbourne. **Mr. J. H. Hardcastle** (Librarian of Eastbourne), has very kindly offered to entertain the members to tea at 5 p.m. The meeting will take place at 6 p.m. **Mr. Councillor J. Easter** (Chairman, Eastbourne Public Libraries Committee) has promised to preside, and the following papers will be read, followed by a discussion:—

"The Book Market." By S. J. REDGRAVE, Eastbourne Public Library.

"Committee Work." By WILLIAM LAW, Brighton Public Library, Museum and Art Galleries.

During the afternoon the Eastbourne staff will be pleased to place themselves at the disposal of those members who care for a ramble to Beachy Head, or to any other place of interest in the neighbourhood.

Those members who intend to be present should notify the undersigned as soon as possible, as special reduced railway fares may be obtained if a sufficient number of members agree to travel from Brighton by the same train.

A. CECIL PIPER, *Hon. Secretary.*  
South Coast Branch.

#### THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL EASTER SCHOOL: LONDON, 1914.

The preliminary arrangements have been made for the Fourth Easter School, Friday—Monday, April 10th—13th, 1914, as follows:—

The headquarters will be the THACKERAY HOTEL, Great Russell Street, a fine hotel near to the British Museum and to the heart of London; and it is hoped that all members will stay for the whole period. All the alternatives have some disadvantages in comparison.

**Thursday, April 9th.**—Reception of such members as arrive this day.

##### **Friday.**—

**Reception** of members.

Morning Visit to **Buckingham Palace Road Library**, Westminster.

Afternoon excursion to **Kew Gardens**.

Evening visit to the **Fulham Central Public Library** (a typical open-access Library), followed by a **reception**.

##### **Saturday.**—

Early morning visit to **Covent Garden Markets**.

Morning visit to **British Museum Library**.

**Motor Tour** to principal sights of **London**.

Evening **Reception** by the **Library Association** at Caxton Hall, Westminster.

##### **Sunday.**—

**St. Paul's Cathedral**, **Westminster Abbey**, etc.

##### **Monday.**—

Excursion to **Oxford**.

Visit to **Bodleian Library**, the College Libraries, etc.

A very large attendance is expected from various parts of Europe, and from the United Kingdom.

**Cost:**

The entire cost, including hotel accommodation, *all meals* (breakfast, lunch, tea, and table d'hôte dinner) from Friday morning until and including dinner on Monday, incidental fares, tips, etc., will be £2 10s. 0d.

**Alternatives:**

For those who can attend only one or two days, the following charges are made (excluding hotel and breakfast):

*With Meals:* Friday, 7s. 0d.; Saturday, 8s. 0d.; Sunday, 5s. 2d.; Monday, 10s. 6d.

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W. C. BERWICK SAYERS,

*Honorary Secretary.*

*The Central Library, Town Hall, Croydon.*

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**EDITORIAL.**

**The L.A.A. and its Branches.**—In our last issue we gave a brief announcement of the foundation of another branch of the L.A.A. in Dublin, which is of itself an occasion for mutual congratulation. To an ever-increasing extent must the L.A.A. depend on branches for support and encouragement; our present constituted branches are doing splendid work in keeping alive the fire of enthusiasm in our ranks. We hail this fresh manifestation of a desire for mutual co-ordination amongst our Dublin friends with warm approval. We have no fear that the progress of the Dublin and District Branch will be other than successful: the imminence of a new year makes the occasion an auspicious one, and we heartily wish Mr. Evans and his colleagues success in the new undertaking. The formation of another new branch obviously suggests thoughts on possibilities elsewhere, and while it is impossible for the L.A.A. executive to suggest to those concerned the need of new branches, yet it is self-evident that there is a considerable field for the extension of our activities in Lancashire, and in the Western and North-Western districts. We are unwilling to believe that enthusiasm for the cause is less prevalent in the districts mentioned than in others where successful branches are waging a war against apathy and inertia with something more than a degree of success. We repeat a hope that those with the requisite initiative will give the necessary impetus to the creation of more L.A.A. branches.

**The Next Easter School.**—Indications are not wanting that more than an ordinary interest is being taken in the forthcoming Easter School in London. Further information detailed elsewhere in our pages indicates that the function will be one of the most successful ever held in the library annals of London.

Certainly it may be said that nothing of a like nature has ever been associated with the L.A.A. It is unnecessary to dilate on the value of these International gatherings as a force in promoting *camaraderie* and in fostering a spirit of good will. All this has been said before, but it will be well to emphasise that not only does the gathering provide an opportunity of meeting our Continental friends, but that this year will witness an assemblage of our provincial friends in London, which bids fair to eclipse all previous occasions; thus providing unique opportunities for the interchange of ideas and views such as the thinking assistant will welcome with satisfaction.

### THE PUBLIC LIBRARY MOVEMENT FROM THE RATE PAYERS' POINT OF VIEW.\*

By R. T. L. PARR, M.A., Local Government Board Auditor.

The subject of this paper might appear, at first sight, to concern Library Committees rather than Librarians. I can imagine someone objecting, mentally at least, that the cost of the dinner is no concern of the cook's; he has to make the best of his materials, whether scanty or plentiful, rare or common—and in like manner the Library Staff are concerned only with the building and the books allotted to their care, and not with financial problems or the opinions of non-literary persons.

But it will be admitted that the slowness or rapidity of library development depends largely, and perhaps principally, upon the funds available. In some places good work has been crippled, and even destroyed, by the statutory limitation of rate-aid and the impossibility of obtaining adequate voluntary contributions. Thus almost every question of library organisation or administration is connected, directly or indirectly, with a question of pounds, shillings, and pence.

To the librarian with his list of proposed purchases cut down to one-third—to the zealous subordinate who knows that there is a position which he could fill if it were created, and which ought to be created if the library is to be rendered efficient, to the literary man obliged to spend substantial sums in purchasing works that he needs for reference only twice or thrice a year, because the library of his town does not contain them,—to these, and many others, a right understanding with the ratepayer—the person who provides much of the cash, and might conceivably be induced to provide more—is a matter of supreme importance.

In dealing with an important practical question, there is one rule which must never be forgotten; the rule against ignoring

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\*Paper read before a meeting of the Library Assistants' Association at the Islington Central Library, Holloway Road, on Wednesday, November 12th, 1913.



unpleasant facts. If we argue on the assumption that other people see everything in the same light as ourselves, and that everyone's aspirations are what, in our opinion, they ought to be, our conclusions are certain to be faulty and misleading. And in this matter of literary culture we stand face to face with a fact concerning which there can be no possible doubt in the mind of anyone who has seriously considered the matter, unpleasant though it be:—*The English are not, and never have been, a bookish nation.*

There you have, in one short sentence, the entire cause and explanation of the rate-aid limit. No limit is placed upon the sum which a local council may expend annually upon Public Lighting, upon works of Sewage Disposal, upon Paving of Streets, upon making luxurious roadways to meet the needs of motor traffic. The British Public is agreed, and will declare by its votes at municipal and parliamentary elections, that people must see, walk, drive, and get rid of unwholesome smells.

But the British Public does not admit that a man must read.

Until forty years ago, probably nine-tenths of the population of these islands were incapable of reading more than the simplest books; yet they lived happily, and some of the most ignorant were what the world calls successful men. These conditions are fresh in memory; they are modified but not abolished to-day. Everyone now can read, but the reading goes no farther, as a rule, than a newspaper or a novel. Library reading in its best sense,—the study of books with a serious object, and the stopping to think over what is read,—are regarded by some as harmless eccentricities, by others as pernicious habits that interfere with business.

But you owe something, nevertheless, to the commercial spirit. Many a handsome public library might never have come into existence but for the fact that painting and decorating Councillors felt it a sacred duty, before going out of office, to widen the local opportunities of such as paint and decorate. One librarian, at all events, owes the additional assistant for whom he had begged ten years in vain, to the fact that an Alderman's son proved no good at the grocery.

Until 1855 there was no such thing as a Public Library in the modern sense of the word. There were great Libraries to which the public had limited access, but they were the property of corporations, colleges, and other bodies, or of the central government, only thrown open as an act of grace to persons possessing certain qualifications. The distinction between these and the modern public library may be exemplified by the distinction which still exists between the reading-room of the British Museum, and the reading-room of a local authority. At

the British Museum, one must have a reader's ticket: and the ticket is not granted without a statement of the specific purpose for which access is desired. In short, the place is intended for a limited class,—those who already know what they want to read and how to read it. The Municipal Library, on the other hand, exists largely for the purpose of teaching the use of books: it could not be needed until elementary education had made sufficient progress to supply a reasonable number of would-be readers. Consequently we find that the three Acts of Parliament passed between 1855 and 1871 touched only the fringe of the subject. Between 1884 and 1890 the birth of a new demand was revealed by no less than four statutes; and all seven were repealed and consolidated by the Act of 1892, which, though since amended in detail, still governs generally the conditions under which Public Libraries are conducted in this country.

It enables the authority of any library district to provide "public libraries, public museums, schools for science, art galleries, and schools for art," including the requisite buildings, with "all requisite furniture, fittings, and conveniences," but it limits the rate which may be levied for the purpose to one penny in the pound, and it gives the local electors the power of adopting the Act subject to a further limitation to one halfpenny or three-farthings.

When we recollect that a single parish may be a library district, and that there are hundreds of parishes in which a rate of one penny in the pound produces less than twenty pounds per annum, the words of the statute, to a sparsely populated or poverty-stricken district, imply little more than if Parliament had said:—"Here is one penny: you have my full permission to invest that sum in the purchase of Park Lane, Buckingham Palace, and the Bank of England." In the country, this absurdity is counteracted by the absence of a demand for books: but if elementary education proceeds at its present rate, and if success attends the efforts of statesmen to prevent the further aggregation of people in the towns, the execution of the Act, even in small places, to an extent far in excess of that allowed by the penny rate, may soon become a necessity.

Another point noticeable in the statutes is that none of them define the subject with which they purport to deal. The Acts do not say that the Council must provide none but good or useful books, whether judged by moral or by literary standards. Suppose that in a particular town nine-tenths of the demand is for inferior, if not objectionable, works. Are the public, including a majority of those who pay rates, to have their demands satisfied? Or can any one ratepayer step in and say, "This money was provided by me: I insist that it shall be

expended in accordance with my view of propriety?" It seems that the discretion is left entirely in the hands of the local authority.

But what if the councillors themselves are non-readers, genuinely desirous but wholly incompetent to separate the good from the bad? They fall back upon the Librarian, who here picks up one of his weapons against the rate limitation. The ship must be lightened—let the least valuable cargo go overboard. I suggest that in the fiction department—always an expensive one because of the heavier use to which the books are subjected—it may be well to brave the accusation of narrowness. Buy, and promptly replace when necessary, well-printed editions of all the great masters; but I would admit no new novel until three years after publication. Three-fourths of the novels that appear have by that time ceased to be read: to consider even the survivors properly is a difficult task.

By adhering strictly to this principle, you can substantially diminish your expenses, and will do no harm to the readers.

Let us consider the question of music. I doubt whether the English as a nation have any better appreciation of music than of literature: but the Vicar of Wakefield's friends are still alive, with their prattle of "pictures, taste, Shakespeare, and the musical glasses." Outdoor exercise for girls has knocked down a little of this hypocrisy. We are not now tortured, as we often were twenty years ago, with the worst amateur performances, and people who cannot sing feel no shame in acknowledging the fact. But the maiden who trips into the public library, when she does not want a novel, still demands what she calls a "piece." Is she to have it? In this matter also I take the unpopular side, and suggest that Public Libraries were intended for higher purposes than to aid her tintinnabulation.

Now consider, please, a very different class of library user—the person apparently of independent means, who loafs in and stands all day in front of a half-penny newspaper. I have noticed that this person practises economy in one particular, and one only. Though able to live without work of any description, he cannot afford a bath. The atmosphere bewrayeth him.

Of what does he read? Betting odds, murders, divorces, and quack advertisements. For long periods he gazes blankly, reading nothing at all. Sometimes the betting odds are blacked out, but I never heard of a Library Committee who had the courage to black out the murders, divorces, and quack advertisements. Attempts have been made to remedy the evil by compiling a patchwork newspaper; cutting out the valuable or harmless columns of the various publications, and pasting them on large sheets of paper, arranged according to subjects.

But several copies must be prepared if the reading-desks of even a moderate-sized Library are to be filled : and the work must be completed early in the morning of every day, so that the broadsides may be displayed in their places when the library opens. Such labour is beyond the power of an ordinary staff : and even when performed, it meets with no approval. Very few of the persons who read newspapers at a public library come for the best that those newspapers contain.

The remedy is drastic, but I suggest that to put it in force is entirely consonant with the best library ideals. It consists in the total exclusion of all daily newspapers except (a) Those published at a price in excess of one penny, and which are accordingly beyond the reach of poor persons except through the library's assistance, and (b), Scottish, Irish, Foreign, and Colonial publications, a glimpse of which may help to widen the public's outlook, and which are often not readily obtainable in England, apart from any question of price.

By strict application of the rule the librarian might rid his institution at once of an unimproving class of literature, and of an unimprovable class of reader : at the same time setting free, for legitimate library work, a large room which has required more cleaning and general attention than any other, and thus has made a bigger hole in the limited funds than can possibly be justified by its few resulting benefits.

Mention of a particular room and its cleaning leads us to the general question of maintenance of buildings. Some librarians complain that the upkeep of a large fabric, including the re-painting and re-decoration which to the average councillor's eye appear far more necessary than the provision of books, places a disproportionate burden upon the penny rate, even when the building itself has been provided through the munificence of Dr. Carnegie. It has been suggested that the library block might be treated as part of the Town Hall or other municipal building to which it is usually adjacent, and maintained, not at the cost of the Library fund, but at the cost of the Borough fund or General District fund as an " establishment " charge. That is a question of law, with regard to which I am precluded from here expressing any authoritative opinion : but, speaking unofficially, and with the explicit caution that what I say must not be taken as proof of the opinion which would be acted upon by the Local Government Board, by the district auditors generally, or even by myself if the question should be brought officially before me, I am inclined to throw cold water upon the suggestion. If it could be proved that the building, or

portion of a building, occupied as a Public Library would, in the absence of such occupation, have remained vacant and unproductive of any rent or profit, a case might possibly be made out : but such circumstances scarcely ever occur in practice. The library is often a building or extension erected with that sole object, which building, if it were vacated, could be profitably turned into offices and the like. Its repair, lighting, heating, and cleaning, together with the interest on the capital expended (for even when the building has been erected by private generosity, the site has usually been provided out of public funds) represent actual expenditure, not mere book-keeping transfers. I think that they form part of the expense necessarily accompanying a library, and that they must be charged against the rate, or proportion of the rate, which is ear-marked for library purposes.

The connection between Libraries, Museums, and Schools of Art is, to the specialist in either, but a slender one. It amounts to very little more than that each of them appeals to some type or other of the serious student.

The botanist is merely bothered by books on military history : the student of Marlborough's campaigns is irritated by having to search for his authorities behind a case of butterflies. A selection of books relating to museum matters may profitably be kept in a museum : and a few histories of art and lives of painters will not be out of place in a picture-gallery ; but the library proper is a world in itself. The combination, under one responsible chief, of all the institutions authorised by the Act of 1892, and the attempt to maintain them all out of the penny rate, is certain to result in one or other being starved and neglected.

With this hint at an unfortunate rivalry between equally deserving causes, I am brought to the most valuable suggestion which I have to offer. It is one which, by reason of that same rivalry, may not be acceptable to all of you : for it consists in nothing less than a proposal that Public Library Authorities, as such, should disappear ; that the attempt to secure a new Library Act, with a higher degree of rate-aid, should be abandoned ; that you should deliberately work for the destruction of the independent platform upon which you stand. I cannot guarantee its success. Political conditions and party cries change from decade to decade, and even from session to session : the reasons which now prompt me may have disappeared in a few years' time. But I offer it, in all sincerity, as affording under present conditions the most hopeful prospect of success in your endeavour to serve, too often against its own will, the unappreciative public.

"A rose," we are proverbially reminded, "by any other name would smell as sweet." But no one with any knowledge of the world will contend that a reform by any other name will become law as quickly. The only way to get good work done is to work it in under a description which, whether correct or not, has proved effective as a catch-word. There are two or three cries that always prove effectual, and "*Education*"! is one of them. People do not love education in the best sense of that word. They hate the trouble of careful thought, of verifying references, of suspending judgment; they delight in shouting and flag-waving, in party cries, in the worship of persons rather than principles. To them "education" means social advancement, the power to make money, and some other things that educated men regard as wholly accidental and unimportant. But the word will fetch them, though they do not know its meaning. Consider yourselves at a Parliamentary or Municipal election, crying "I'm for the improvement of the local Public Library." It may gain you a few votes. Add, "I'm for the increase of the Library rate"! and you will lose at least an equal number. You stand in a *cul-de-sac*; the narrow roadway of desire for intellectual culture is blocked impassably by the stronger desire for sordid ease and petty ostentation.

But now change your tune, and yell "I'm for the education of the masses! and refuse to be satisfied with the elementary school. I demand, for all alike, facilities limited only by the student's capacity of development. I say that if a young man wants to engage in study or research, no financial consideration ought to stand in the way of his wishes." You will obtain a following at once; even those who hate the prospect will not dare to speak against you: and if the election can be made to turn upon that question, you are no longer a candidate—you are IN.

There is nothing original, nothing experimental, in the suggestion that you should utilise this fetish to advance your own branch of the public service. It has been done already by those whose zeal is mainly for the nation's physical well-being: and it has been done by those who believe, rightly or wrongly, in direct State assistance for the poorly-paid. The earliest Education Acts aimed at book-learning only, and a very elementary degree of that: but now physical culture is part of the curriculum. I imagine that a Public Sports Bill, proposing free football and cricket grounds and apparatus, for the entire youth of this country, would obtain wider support than a Public Libraries' Bill, because the average English voter has stronger inborn sympathy with sport than with research. But I feel very sure that the physical culturists have done wisely to evade the

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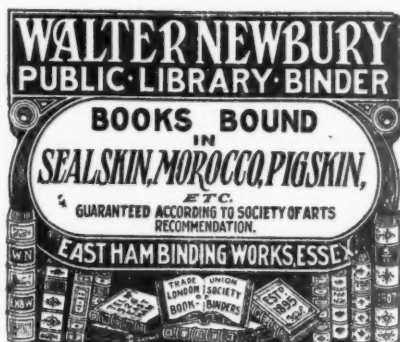
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- Sec. 1.—The Biographers and Critics of Dr. Johnson.
- Sec. 2.—An historical account of the development of scientific periodical literature in one or more branches of science.
- Sec. 3.—A comparative critical account of the classes dealing with Bibliography and Library Science in the Library of Congress Classification (as adapted in "The Union Class List of the L.A. and L.A.A. Libraries"), Brown's "Subject Classification," and Dewey's "Decimal Classification."
- Sec. 4.—Discuss the merits of Printed Classified and Dictionary Catalogues, comparing modern examples of each.
- Sec. 5.—(a), The Law relating to Public Libraries in the United States, or (b), Book-collecting in Italy at the Renaissance.
- Sec. 6.—Newspapers and Periodicals: methods of public display, filing, preservation, and disposal in other ways; with a list of the fifty leading periodicals classified for (a) filing, (b) binding, and (c) sale, etc.

The Syllabus of information relating to the examination, etc., will be sent on application to ERNEST A. BAKER, M.A., D.Lit., Hon. Secretary, Education Committee, Caxton Hall, S.W.



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**LONDON AND OXFORD**

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Members and other Librarians, Assistant and Chief, are cordially invited, from all parts of Europe.

Charges for the whole or part of the School have been arranged.

See Announcement in this issue.

W. C. BERWICK SAYERS, Honorary Secretary,

Central Library, Town Hall, Croydon.

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**By H. W. FOVARGUE,**

Honorary Solicitor to the Library Association.

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opposition which such a bill would have provoked in certain quarters, and to follow the example of the ancient Greeks in treating sport as a part of education, so that to-day charges upon the rates for goal-posts and tennis nets are allowed as a matter of course. The case is similar even in matters already in part provided for by special statutes. For example, there is a Baths and Washhouses Act, under which local authorities would provide those necessities of civilisation, but for every cheap bath provided under that statute, a hundred absolutely free ones are provided under the Education Acts. The children cannot sit in school without discomfort to themselves and annoyance to their fellows unless they are clean, said the hygienists. Therefore to wash them, and teach them to wash themselves, is a normal part of their education.

Then comes the feeding. It had long been felt by a certain school of politicians that there is something wrong in the system under which the working-man with a large family can earn no more, in the ordinary course, than a man of similar age and employment who has only himself to keep. The Poor Law did not meet the case; for under the Poor Law the support of wife and child is treated as a necessary expense of the husband and father, and relief given for their benefit is subject to nearly the same restrictions as if the man had sought it for himself alone. A solution was found by taking advantage of a fact frequently reported by Inspectors of schools: children of very poor parents were demonstrably unable to learn properly through coming to school in a famished condition. Now the Local Education Authorities have power to feed these children, when in actual attendance at school, at the cost of the rates, and it is left entirely to their discretion whether the parents shall be called upon to repay. Thus has been introduced the far-reaching economic principle that every man may transfer to the State, without any stigma of pauperism, a proportion of the cost of supporting his family, so long as they are between certain ages and he can satisfy a sympathetic Local Authority that his means are inadequate. It is a principle which, if put forward by itself, would have been denounced on all sides as unmitigated Socialism: but regarded as a mere side-issue of Education, it slipped into the Statute-book after comparatively little discussion, and we may be quite certain that no political party will ever venture to take it out again.

Within the sphere of the Public Libraries Acts themselves, the same power operates. Art training, practically equal to that of the schools upon which you have permission to spend a part of your penny, and collections which go far to take the place of your museums and picture galleries, are now being provided as

part of Higher Education—yes, and of elementary education also. School libraries are encouraged. Any boy may now, if his local councillors think fit, devour his Ballantyne or Henty at home every evening at the cost of the rates.

In my own district the last-mentioned phase of the education movement has been turned to excellent effect from your point of view. There was a free juvenile library, nominally public, but in practice confined to the children attending the Elementary Schools. It was housed in the general library building, cared for by the library staff, and supported at the charge of the penny rate. Now it has been transferred to the Education Committee, who administer it for the benefit of the same class of reader, but at the cost of the Education rate, and the Library Committee have an equivalent sum set free for the development of their own more special province.

Need I cite further instances? You cannot fail to follow the argument.

I have thrown out a caution, and I will repeat it: political war-cries alter, and Education may not always be a word to conjure with. But so far as present indications go, there is little prospect of a change. Speaking as a private individual who reads the signs of the times, and with an emphatic disclaimer of official authority or secret inspiration, I say that your wisest course is deliberately to abandon all new Library Bills, deliberately to acquiesce in the repeal of all existing Library Acts, and to paddle your craft as quickly as possible into the rushing stream of the great Education Boom.

No strained interpretations or verbal subtleties are necessary. Public Libraries are far more closely connected with Education, in the word's most usual sense, than footballs, baths, or breakfasts. What waste of labour to teach our youth to read, if when they leave school the faculty must rust for lack of good reading. What waste of time to teach our youth to think, if they are to be cut off, with minds yet immature, from all that men have thought before them. No one leaving school, even the secondary school, has attained a stage at which he can possibly be called more than half educated. Will the State break the hearts of her ablest sons and daughters by putting the cup to their lips and withdrawing it at the moment when their crude taste is just trained to an appreciation of its flavour?

But you can supply the rhetoric for yourselves. I will put your claim mathematically: *A complete and efficient system of public libraries is a necessary corollary to any satisfactory solution of the problem of public education.*

A couple of clauses in the next Education Act, implying recognition of this claim, will be far more easy to secure, and

far more effectual, than an elaborate Libraries' Act with its attempt to oil and mend and stretch the old machinery.

There will be jealousies, of course. Not among you personally, for with the development of libraries your own prospects must improve, whatever the statute under which you are appointed. But the Chairman of the Library Committee may object to merge his authority and power of control in that of another department. I suggest, however, that this difficulty will not endure. Whatever fun may be fairly poked at some of the councillors, I know well that among them are genuine, zealous, self-sacrificing workers for the public good: and I do not believe that they will hesitate to sink their personal importance for the good of the cause. Be this as it may. I firmly believe that on those lines—the total abolition of the separate Library Fund, the separate Library accounts, and the Library Committee, except as a sub-committee of the Education Committee—you have the brightest prospect of reconciling your ambitions with the good-will of those who provide the money.

#### DISCUSSION.

The discussion was opened by Mr. J. D. YOUNG (Greenwich,) who said that the paper was a really good statement of the public library question by an outsider. He was inclined to regard Mr. Parr as a whole-hogger Machiavellian in view of the suggestions he had made towards obtaining better conditions, through the medium of an Education Bill rather than by means of the present Libraries' Bill before Parliament. Mr. C. H. R. PEACH (Gray's Inn) supported Mr. Parr in his suggestion that librarians should work towards getting a clause inserted in an Education Bill for the removal of the rate limit and other needed reforms. He believed there was very little chance of the Public Libraries' Bill becoming law. Mr. J. E. WALKER (Tottenham) feared that in the event of Mr. Parr's suggestion being realized the public library would be swallowed up by the Education Authority. Mr. J. D. STEWART (Islington) thought that Mr. Parr had taken up the attitude of an outsider, but with more knowledge than the outsider usually has. The position was that of the ordinary ratepayer who sees the library rate on his rate demand note, and who takes it for granted that a great deal of the reading is novel reading. But anyone who knows will say that this is not the case. Mr. Parr had said that the English nation was not a bookish nation, a statement that was unsupported by facts. Mr. Stewart agreed on the question of newspapers, and thought "The Times" and the local papers sufficient. With regard to the library being part of the Town Hall and supported out of the general fund, he believed this would be illegal as the Acts distinctly limit the expenditure for public library purposes to 1d. in the pound. They either wanted a new Library Bill or it would have to go through as part of an Education Bill, as Mr. Parr suggested. Mr. LEWIS REID (North London Students' Association) said that thirty years ago they had in London only six or seven first-class papers, to-day there were many more than this, and it was very necessary that the leading provincial papers should be within the reach of the public. The PRESIDENT said that only "The Times" and the local papers were taken at Islington and they thought this sufficient. He believed in the value of the music section in the public library. It was a means of education and recreation.

A Vote of Thanks to Mr. Parr was moved by the HONORARY SECRETARY and seconded by the HONORARY TREASURER. Both the speakers were almost in entire disagreement with the reader of the paper, suggesting that a nation that in literature had produced a Shakespeare and in music a Coleridge-Taylor could not be said to lack either a taste for books or an inborn love of music.

The Resolution was carried unanimously amidst applause, and Mr. Parr afterwards replied to the points raised.

A hearty Vote of Thanks to the Islington Public Libraries' Committee and to the Staff Club, moved by Mr. YOUNG, and seconded by the HON. EDITOR, concluded a most interesting meeting at a late hour.

## PROCEEDINGS.

### DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING.

The alteration of the date, and the imminence of the Christmas holidays, undoubtedly had an unfortunate effect on the attendance at the December Meeting, held at the Hammersmith Central Library on Wednesday, the 17th. Mr. Martin, the Chief Librarian, occupied the chair. Prior to the meeting the members and friends inspected the handsome library and the special features of working, after which they assembled in the librarian's office—a large apartment—where they were welcomed by Mr. Martin. Little time was wasted, and contenting himself with a few words of welcome and some cursory remarks on the work of the Hammersmith Public Libraries, the Chairman called upon Mr. H. M. CASHMORE, deputy chief librarian of the Birmingham Public Libraries, to read his paper on "A Provincial Point of View."

Without intending to detract one iota from the undoubted cleverness of the paper, it must be admitted without more ado, that Mr. Cashmore's address was provocative to a degree, and daring in its conception. Scintillating with humour and characterised by shrewdness of observation, it was an address which all fortunate enough to be present thoroughly enjoyed. The speaker prefaced the more serious points of his paper by a retrospect of a summer excursion to London a decade ago. His pictures of the lofty condescension with which he was received at some of the libraries he visited were anything but flattering to the London librarians concerned, and it is to be hoped that the moral will not be lost sight of in the banquet of good things provided for the evening's delectation. As has been previously hinted there was a more serious side to the paper which concerned itself mainly with the education of the Assistant and incidentally with the speaker's attitude to the L.A. examination syllabus and its effects, intentional or otherwise, on the modern assistant. Mr. Cashmore pleaded for a more unfettered and free conception of the education of the assistant, and incidentally

he condemned examinations in general terms as having an effect, not intended, of stunting more general education, in that the possession of certificates acted as a deterrent to education in its wider sense, by satisfying the recipient and inducing a spirit of content abhorrent to the true spirit of education. He deplored the passing of the spirit of the older librarianship with its inherent knowledge of book contents as contrasted with the modern "window dressing" spirit. Examinations were producing a class of window dresser all of whose stock-in-trade was displayed in the window. The speaker intimated that he had no great love either for the study of theories or for specialisation, and likened the present system of training to Ezekiel's valley of dry bones. The education assistants needed was not, he said, narrow and technical, but as wide as the world. Literary manuals were horrors which he would gladly burn. It was a great mistake to look at Literature through other people's glasses. A syllabus was one of the most abominable things on earth. Assistants should be encouraged to read widely, not to specialise in matters which were never likely to be of use to them. Such were a few of the ideas with which the speaker regaled the assemblage, interspersed with copious epithets and expressed in a vein of humour which, if it did not totally belie his words, at all events gave one reasonable grounds for supposing that the speaker took a pure delight in promulgating original ideas, obviously the product of wide reading and the application of unorthodox thinking.

In opening the discussion, Mr. F. E. SANDRY (Canning Town), thought that the L.A. educational system was not ideal and was not so considered, but would be gradually improved as experience was gained. It was a dangerous thing for those in responsible positions to belittle the efforts of the L.A. examining body, as this tended to unsettle the junior assistant. He was of opinion that correspondence classes were of use and helped in the making of assistants, who were an improvement on those of 10 years ago. Mr. J. E. WALKER (Tottenham), said that there must be some hall-mark of proficiency: hence the examinations. He understood that the Birmingham authorities paid their assistants extra for certificates gained. The HONORARY TREASURER thought that in discussing Mr. Cashmore's paper there was a danger of missing the vein of humour running through it. Mr. Cashmore was a professional anarchist, and probably purposely exaggerated his case against present-day training of assistants. With it all there was a very real danger of attaching too much importance to the products of examinations. A cultured man did not always mean a successful teacher. Mr. J. WARNER (Croydon), was of opinion that the

critical element in the paper was liable to do harm. The average junior assistant must be guided in his professional advancement. He was of opinion that juniors frequently took the examinations at too early a stage and consequently the fault did not lie with the examining body, but with the chiefs who permitted their assistants to sit. One remedy was to make the scheme more difficult and so eliminate the immature junior. Mr. W. B. THORNE (Poplar), thought that the secret of the paper lay in its undoubted humorous nature. It should not be taken too seriously. It was a clever paper in which there was a deal of truth, and therein was the danger if misunderstood. The examination method was the only method at present. Mr. J. F. HOGG (Battersea), said that Mr. Cashmore was a pessimist in the matter of the education of the assistant. The assistant who took an interest in the books in his library and also attempted the L.A. examinations, was undoubtedly a better assistant for it. At present the assistant had no status and the L.A. should endeavour to improve the prospects of the assistant.

The HONORARY SECRETARY, in moving a vote of thanks to Mr. Cashmore, congratulated him on the brilliance of the paper, which was essentially provincial in spirit. The paper contained quotation after quotation from our thinkers and philosophers and showed wide reading. Examinations might be Ezekiel's valley of dry bones, as the speaker had inferred, but when these dry bones were breathed upon by the spirit, they lived again. The speaker's denunciation of technical jargon did not apply, as in studying for instance, photography, technical jargon was the first thing the student learnt. It was no criticism of the study of classification to condemn it because an assistant was unable to find a book by a given system. In his opinion the paper was a huge joke. Mr. C. H. R. PEACH (Gray's Inn), seconded the vote of thanks, and deprecated the attempt to label Mr. Cashmore as a humorist pure and simple. In criticising the examination papers, the speaker said the questions were often catch questions. The Examination Committee tried to summarise all the experience of the last 40 years in an examination paper. Reform in the examination was badly needed. In closing the discussion, THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. Martin) referred to the high level attained by the discussion. The assistant who passed examinations must be the better assistant for it, but there was a tendency to flaunt certificates before the faces of members of the staff and the chief.

In reply, Mr. CASHMORE said it devolved on his criticsers to parry his cuts and thrusts. He had no wish to undermine the confidence of junior assistants in the examinations, but he still thought that in many cases assistants had been spoilt by the



system of training. Humorously he denied that his paper should be considered as the effort of a humorist. He was obliged to the Honorary Treasurer for dotting his i's and crossing his t's. He regretted the tendency to appoint librarians and assistants on paper qualifications alone. Education and general knowledge, tact, balance, and commonsense were far more useful than an ability to pass examinations. Promotion should depend on work, not on the possession of certificates.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman, proposed by the HONORARY TREASURER, and seconded by the HONORARY EDITOR, concluded the proceedings.

#### NORTH EASTERN BRANCH.

A very successful meeting of the North Eastern Branch was held at Tynemouth on Wednesday, December 17th, nearly forty members being present.

In the afternoon a football match was played between teams representing Newcastle and the Rest of the Branch, resulting in a win for the former team by three goals to one. The match took place on the Tynemouth Secondary School Ground, by kind permission of Mr. W. E. Heaton, M.A., Headmaster.

After the match the members were entertained to tea at the invitation of Mr. H. T. Rutherford, Chairman of the Tynemouth Public Library Committee. A vote of thanks was heartily accorded to our kind host, for whom Mr. Hair, the Librarian, responded, in the absence of Mr. Rutherford, who was in London.

The General Meeting was held in the Public Library, the members being received by the Librarian. An interesting and highly controversial paper was read by Mr. I. Briggs, of Newcastle. Commencing with the question "Should an English paper be included in the Examination Syllabus of the Library Association?" Mr. Briggs said that he was convinced that a large proportion of the failures in the examinations were due to a weak control of language. All such means as procuring a charter enrolling a register would fail to classify us as a professional body unless the education and address, particularly of the Members, were such as would impress the public. It was the earnest inquirer, the man who was above the average in education, who was almost sure to run up against the illiterate assistant; the common denominator of the whole library staff. He had a feeling that the whole talk about the status of librarians, and the eager parading of F.L.A.'s amounted to professional weakness; it was all a hope that these things would cover deficiencies. The average assistant looked upon rhetoric as merely something on which to exercise one's inclinations. His sole aim was the obtaining of certificates, the possession of which was demanded when seeking new posts. The speaker remarked the difference between polish and culture, and the greater desirability of the latter. The introduction of the untrained man was not peculiar to the Library profession, broader education was accepted as the equivalent of professional knowledge in many spheres of life, but with it in addition, was much to be preferred. A recent writer had said "Rhetoric is a useful art, like that of curing the sick or that of building bridges." The average young person looked upon grammar as a dismal science. Some schools turned out good linguists, but the majority did not. As a test of a candidate's fitness for librarianship he would give him the "Dean's English" to read. If he did not of his own accord read another he should be told to clear out. Of all professional examinations held

in the country the Library Association examination was the only one which did not include English in its syllabus. The preference of Committees for the University man to the trained man had never been a secret to him; they recognised that on the broader educational foundation a man could build a knowledge of the work quicker than another who had to work at foundation and superstructure simultaneously. The status of librarianship was advancing quicker than the Librarians. The examination syllabus needed constant revision; one thing must be added and that was English. He suggested that English should be taken either as a preliminary subject or as a part of the general syllabus. For those who wished to take up the study he recommended Washington Moon's "The Dean's English"; E. H. Lewis' "First book in writing English"; Bain's "Rhetoric and composition," and Minto's "Manual of English Prose Literature." A long and earnest discussion followed. Mr. SMETTEM (Newcastle) supported the speaker; he had tried to work at the syllabus and English at the same time and had found he could not do so. Mr. YATES (Sunderland) thought that literary expression was instinctive rather than acquired. The best help was to study foreign languages. He suggested that there should be an entrance examination in all libraries, the papers to be sent out from the Library Association to secure a uniformity of candidature. Mr. LILLIE (Gateshead) said it behoved every Branch to send a recommendation on this subject to the special committee now sitting. One fact he mentioned; it meant the passing of yet another examination. Mr. GIBSON (Newcastle) thought this difficulty would be overcome by amalgamating sections V. and VI. Mr. HERDMAN (Sunderland) asked if students were to understand that at present marks were given for grammar. Examiners should emphasise the fact that marks were given for composition and style. Messrs. HURFORD (Newcastle), DANIEL (South Shields), FOSTALL (Sunderland) and LYNN (Sunderland), also took part in the discussion. The CHAIRMAN thought the matter was of sufficient importance to warrant the meeting passing a resolution. Mr. BRIGGS thereupon proposed and Mr. SMETTEM seconded "That it is the opinion of this Branch that a preliminary examination in English should be passed before students are allowed to begin upon the syllabus. Holders of certificates for such examinations as the Cambridge Local, the Society of Arts, or other examinations recognised by the Library Association to be exempt."

Mr. HERDMAN proposed an amendment and Mr. ORD seconded "That in the opinion of the North Eastern Branch the Examining Authorities of the Library Association be asked to consider the advisability of allotting a certain percentage of marks for English in each of the sectional examinations."

The amendment was lost. The substantive motion was then put and carried unanimously. It was decided to send a copy of the resolution to the Council of the Library Assistants' Association and to ask them to obtain an expression of opinion from the whole of the Association.

Mr. H. FOSTALL (Sunderland) read a paper on "Some phases of extension work." He reviewed the possibilities of Library lectures, Reading circles, and Debating societies. The aims were the cultivation of a good taste for literature, the exchanging of ideas on books read, the refining and broadening of the mind, and to improve oral reading. He proceeded to deal with school libraries, library visits, and picture collections. He mentioned the recommendation of the North Western Branch of the Library Association on the extension of library facilities for Tutorial classes. Lantern slide collections, and photographic surveys were briefly outlined. The whole paper was made unusually interesting by illustrations from practical working of the schemes. Mr. HERDMAN (Sunderland) said that Mr. Fostall had spoken of principles and not of details. He treated too lightly the extra work entailed. Where were extension methods to end? What would the

librarian eventually become? Were school libraries, picture collections, etc., all relative parts of our work. He would not be dragged by popular opinion into all these phases of extension. Mr. YATES (Sunderland) believed in every legitimate means of bringing the reader to the books. Mr. POTTS (Tyne-mouth) thought the main thing was to force upon the people the fact that there was such a place as the Public Library and that it was there for their use. At Tynemouth they were introducing reading matter into the waiting rooms of Labour Bureau. Mr. BRIGGS (Newcastle) was in sympathy with extension work among the children, but he was sceptical regarding the success of extension methods among adults. Such extension methods as those outlined only appealed to, and were only taken advantage of, by people who were already readers. He thought it a misnomer to call photographic surveys extension work, surely they were an essential part of library work. Miss WARD and Mr. GIBSON (Newcastle), Mr. YATES (Sunderland), Mr. LILLIE (Gateshead), and others joined in the discussion. During the evening votes of thanks were passed to the Headmaster of the Secondary School; to the Library Committee; to Mr. Hair, the Librarian; and to the readers of the papers.

#### MIDLAND BRANCH.

On Thursday, November 20th, the Midland Branch met at Rugby. Mr. R. Fenley, the sub-librarian there, was responsible for the programme, and first conducted the party, consisting of nearly thirty members and friends, to Rugby School. Under the guidance of Mr. C. P. Hastings, M.A., one of the assistant masters, the visitors went round the School buildings and grounds, and were much interested in the explanatory remarks of their guide, and the many historical associations which he recounted. Starting from the quad, the party were shown the old "Big School" and the Chapel, as well as various class-rooms and a typical library, dining-hall, and boy's study. One of the class-rooms visited was that in which Dr. Arnold taught the sixth form. The desk in this room which Matthew Arnold used to occupy as one of his father's pupils was pointed out by Mr. Hastings, who remarked that at that time the room was frequently the scene of outbursts of indignation on the Doctor's part at his son's inability to make headway in mathematics. In the School grounds, Mr. Hastings pointed out the spots which various incidents in "Tom Brown's Schooldays" have made famous.

From the School the party proceeded to the Temple Reading Room and Art Museum, where an interesting hour was spent in inspecting the Library and the Museum with Mr. A. K. Morgan, the art master and curator.

Benn Buildings were next visited, members being received there by Mr. Councillor Loverock, Chairman of the Rugby Urban District Council, and several members of the Library Committee. Councillor Loverock made a short speech of welcome, giving various historical and other facts relative to Rugby, and Mr. H. Grindle, Chairman of the Branch, suitably replied. Tea was then taken, after which the party proceeded to the Public Library. The members having been shown round, the business meeting was commenced in the Museum above the Library.

After the usual preliminary business, a resolution was passed heartily congratulating Mr. C. Nowell, of the Coventry Public Library, and a member of the Branch, on his recent appointment to the sub-librarianship of Norwich. A letter from Dr. A. A. David, Headmaster of Rugby School, was read, expressing his regrets that pressure of work prevented him from attending and addressing the meeting as he had hoped to do.

Mr. R. FENLEY then read his paper, "Are Museums desirable in connection with Public Libraries?" He confined his remarks principally to

museums of local antiquities, and emphasised their utility as the complement of the collection of local printed matter preserved in most libraries. He illustrated the value of such local museums by Rugby's own case, and pointed out that the room in which the meeting was gathered contained the nucleus of what might well become an important collection of local antiquities, which in all probability would never have been preserved but for the existence of the Museum.

What promised to be a very interesting discussion was commenced by Mr. H. W. Checketts, who was followed by Messrs. H. Woodbine and W. Kenning, Librarian of Rugby. The time for departure having been reached, however, it became necessary to terminate the proceedings somewhat abruptly.

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#### SOUTH WALES BRANCH.

The December meeting was held at the Central Library, Cardiff, on Wednesday, the 12th. In the absence of the Chairman of the Branch, Mr. Fred Bullock presided over an appreciative audience.

The meeting took the form of a Recital by the Rev. Carvasso Carlyon, who rendered, with splendid elocutionary ability, a satirical poem entitled "Nothing to wear." This was followed by the first part of "The Chimes," in which the reciter again demonstrated his dramatic powers. The items were thoroughly enjoyed by those present, and in proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Carlyon, Mr. Charles Sexton paid a tribute to the generosity of the reciter in once again favouring the Branch with a recital. This was seconded by Mr. C. Fuller, who stated that the talent displayed by the Rev. Carlyon was aptly befitting to the calling of which the reciter was a member. The vote of thanks was very heartily received by all.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Fuller is leaving the profession to reside in Birmingham, as his abilities—of unusual prominence for so young a man—together with his amiable disposition, will be a loss to the South Wales Branch and to the profession generally.

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#### LECTURES ON THE ART OF PRINTING.

A course of Eight Lectures on the development of Letterpress Printing and Book Illustration and on the History of the Printing Press will be given by Mr. R. A. Peddie, Librarian of the St. Bride Foundation Typographical Library at the St. Bride Institute, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, on Mondays (February 23rd excepted) at 7.30 p.m., beginning on 12th January, 1914. *Admission is free* and each lecture will be illustrated by lantern slides. There will also be exhibitions of books and prints during the lectures.

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#### NEW MEMBERS.

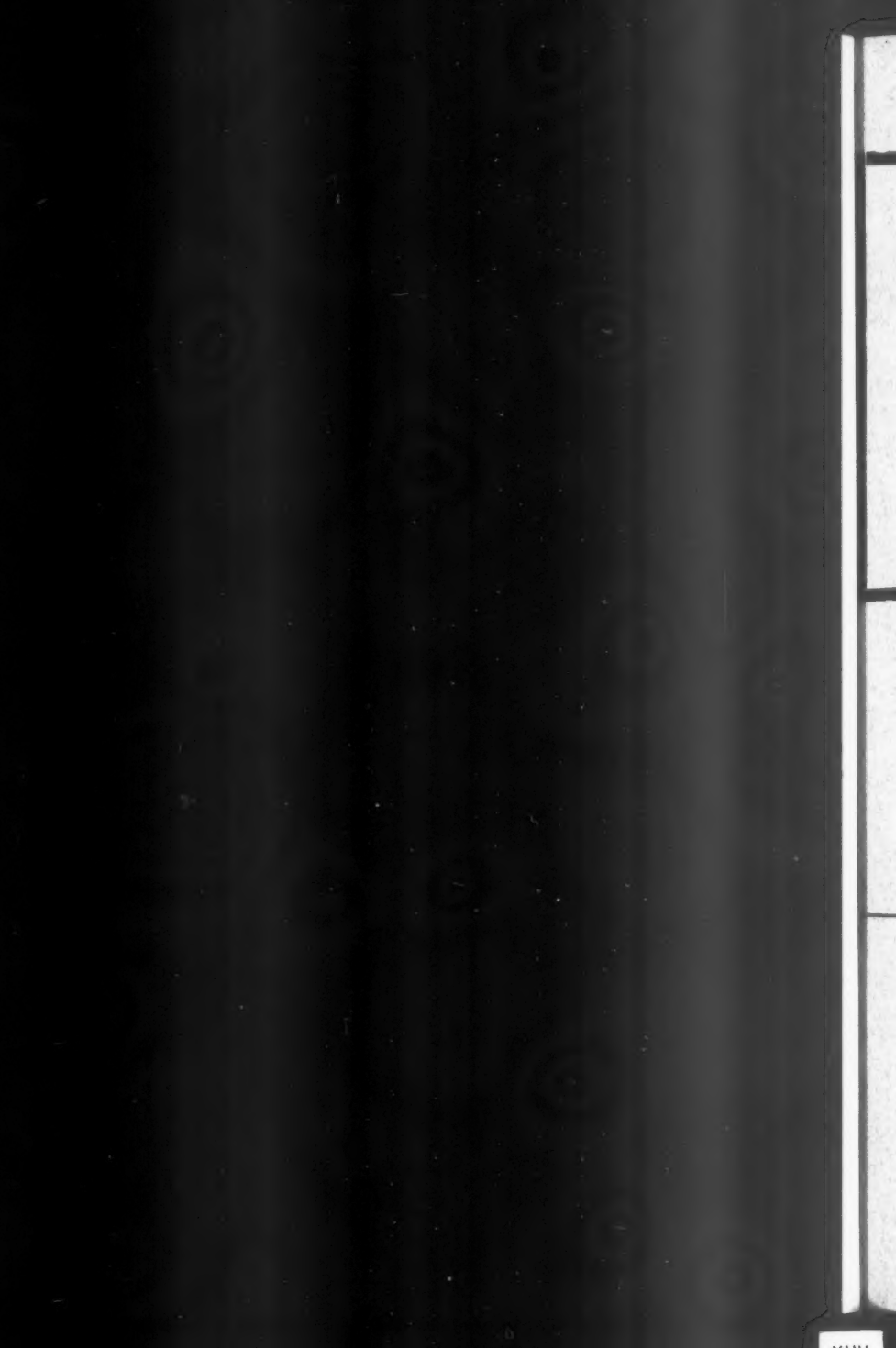
**Associates:** Leslie H. Joselyn; Percy W. Lynn; Benjamin M. Vanner (all of St. Bride Foundation, London); Arthur Lobb (Ilford).

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#### APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES.

JONES, Mr. GURNER P., Stepney, has recently received the degree of B.A. from the London University. We offer our member sincere congratulations.





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*All communications relating to this journal should be addressed to MR. H. G. SURETIES, Shepherd's Hill Library, Highgate, London, N.*

*All communications relating to the Library Assistants' Association should be addressed to the Honorary Secretary, MR. W. C. BERWICK SAYERS, The Central Library, Town Hall, Croydon, from whom particulars of membership and the objects of the Association can be obtained.*

*The address of the Association's Library is the Central Library, 68, Holloway Road, Islington, N. (MISS OLIVE E. CLARKE, Honorary Librarian).*

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